



AHA Chapter

THE NEWSLETTER OF

The HUMANIST ASSOCIATION of CENTRAL CONNECTICUT

January 2001



ASHS Affiliate

All About Genes, from Mechanisms to Morals

On Monday, January 15, 2001, Dr. David Schafer will satisfy a request of several members by answering the question: what is all this gene and DNA business, anyhow?

For those not familiar with our founder's career, he developed a molecular diagnostics (DNA) laboratory at the West Haven VA Medical Center during 1997 and 1998. This would explain why anyone would ask him such a question! He also has decades of experience as an educator, so expect to be able to follow along.

David plans to explain the fundamentals of what a gene is, what a genome is, what a chromosome is, what DNA is, what DNA is made of and how it is constructed, what DNA does and what is the result of gene action, how the products of gene action (expression) are involved in the formation of an organism (human or other), how the products are involved in the function of the organism, and how these functions work together to create complex functions, including some that appear to control aspects of human behavior, even some that we may regard as moral determinants.

Bring a curious friend to this enlightening event at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, January 15, 2001 at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden. As usual, our presentation at 8:00 p.m. will be preceded by half-an-hour of socialization, accompanied by coffee and refreshments.

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- Sat., 13 New London discussion group at the Mystic Noank Library. Topic: "The War on Drugs." 10:15 a.m.
- Mon., 15 Monthly meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program: Dr. David Schafer, "The Human Genome, from Mechanisms to Morals" 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., 21 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 1:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY

- TBA Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike. 7:30 p.m.
- Mon., 19 Monthly meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program: Ken Feder "Lost: One Continent. Reward: A Scientific Appraisal of the Myth of Atlantis." 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., 25 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 1:30 p.m.

MARCH

- TBA Humanist Conversations at 700 Hartford Turnpike. 7:30 p.m.
- Mon., 19 Monthly meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike.
Coffee and conversation. 7:30 p.m.
Main program: Paul LaCombe, "Choosing a Death with Dignity." 8:00 p.m.
- Sun., 25 Board meeting at USNH, 700 Hartford Turnpike. 1:30 p.m.

Ken Feder in February

Archaeologist Ken Feder, the equally entertaining and educational presenter, will return on February 19 at 7:30 p.m. with "Lost: One Continent. Reward: A Scientific Appraisal of the Myth of Atlantis". Intrigued? You won't be disappointed.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Adult \$35
 Family \$50
 In cases of financial hardship, the association may waive the membership fee. The membership year runs from 1/1 to 12/31.

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The deadline for each issue is three weeks prior to the monthly meeting. The editor would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue.

Elections

Our new slate of officers was approved unanimously at the annual meeting on Monday, December 18, 2000.

Manny Ratafia assumes the role of president, swapping places with Doug Peary, who becomes vice-president. June Schafer continues as secretary, and our treasurer is again Richard Siddall.

The committee chairs are almost unaltered, with Nat Wolf continuing as program committee chair, Mickey Koth as development committee chair, Carol Stone as publications committee chair (with Richard Siddall as webmaster), and June Schafer heading up the publicity committee. This year Bob Rafford is on his own as chair of the membership committee, and the responsibility for hospitality will rotate between several volunteers.

Poetry

Joyce Wolf devised a poetry competition for the solstice party. She provided a list of pop-culture words to be used in a poem. The winning poem was this marvelous humanist limerick, penned by Gabriella Brand.

*Are you aware of the Humanist trip?
 It's crazy, it's far out, it's hip
 We celebrate life
 Reason, love and no strife
 If you get it, you'll dig it and flip!*

Humanist Conversations

The February Humanist Conversations topic will be announced at the January monthly meeting.

Silent Auction Results

Our annual meeting in December once again featured a silent auction. The smaller selection of items resulted in increased competition to be the highest bidder. When the dust had settled, we had raised \$80.51 for the Endowment Fund.

Mystic-Noank

The next meeting of the Mystic-Noank humanist discussion group is scheduled for January 13, 2001 at 10:15 a.m. As usual it will be at the Mystic Noank Library, 40 Library St., Mystic. The library telephone number is (860) 536-7721.

The topic for this meeting will be "The War on Drugs." Aside from the many practical considerations — Does the government have a right to interfere with personal choice? Prohibition required a constitutional amendment and proved to be a disaster. What is so different about drugs? Is it less ethical to be affected by drugs than by alcohol? Your thoughts are important.

If you need more information, please contact George or Paula Marcus at gminnoank@worldnet.att.net or (860) 572-9188.